DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 148 752 SP 011 961

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TITLE The Alert Chairman: Key to Alternative Careers.
PUB DATE Sep 77
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at Midwest District American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Professional Preparation Conference (Angolo, Indiana, September 26-28, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Responsibility; Career Choice; *Career Planning; *College Majors; Educational Alternatives; Higher Education; *Job Market; *Physical Education; Social Change; *Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS *Alternative Careers

ABSTRACT

The responsibilities of the administrator of a college of physical education are discussed in this paper. Emphasis is placed on guiding physical education majors into possible careers other than teaching and on developing a multi-career curriculum. It is pointed out that social change is taking place and that because of decreasing school enrollment it is often difficult for a teacher of physical education to find employment. Some major societal trends are pointed out for consideration, such as, increasing interest in physical fitness on the part of people of all ages, the aging trend in our society, and the growing leisure class. Appended are lists of suggested career options for physical education majors. (JD)

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MDAAHPER PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION CONFERENCE
September 26, 1977

"THE ALERT CHAIRMAN: KEY TO ALTERNATIVE CAREERS"

Robert J. Gillis--Adrian College (Michigan)

Ladies and gentlemen I consider it a great honor to have been invited to address those of you in attendance at this physical education professional preparation conference today.

Prior to assuming my present position as vice president for academic affairs, I served four years as a public school teacher and coach followed by nineteen years as both a director of athletics and physical education department chairman. This professional experience enables me to feel somewhat confident in presenting the following thoughts and suggestions on alternative career opportunities for undergraduate physical education majors.

In my opinion the department chairmanship is one of the most important positions in academe. Upon the shoulders of the chairman falls the responsibility of maintaining the academic quality and vitality of the department. A physical education department chairman's most important challenge in the years ahead will be that of maintaining sufficient student enrollments in the department's professional preparation programs. In attempting to meet this challenge the chairman might do well to start with these questions: What changes in society can be anticipated in the next quarter of a century? What future trends or facts can be identified now which will affect the future work, careers, vocations and the lives of physical education majors? What can the department do to help insure greater career success for its graduates?

The recommendations which are advanced in this paper are made with the threefold assumption that (1) changes in the

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professional curriculum and requirements originate within the department, (2) that successful chairmen remain alert to changing conditions and (3) that chairmen are administrative activists; that is, they present more ideas than they receive and act to meet problems rather than react to them.

I presume that most of you, like myself, are deeply concerned about the fact that, generally speaking, higher education in the United States is undergoing the greatest overall and long-run rate of decline in the history of its growth pattern.

The Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching stated "that if higher education were divided into teacher education . . . and nonteacher education, then it would appear that the first segment has been decimated (actually cut about in half) and the second segment is generally healthy; in fact, some parts of this second segment are booming as never before: schools of mines and minerals, of law, of medicine, of business administration. Higher education stands divided against itself, part sick and part well."[1]

Unfortunately many departments of physical education engaged in the professional preparation of undergraduate majors are or will soon find themselves included within that "part sick" segment of higher education. The challenge confronting these departments is to cure or partially alleviate the sickness by responding to the needs of our changing society with programs that prepare graduates to meet those needs.

The Carnegie Trustees went on to declare ". . . that much of the anxiety now current is caused by the uncertainty as to when and where the decline of growth rates may end . . . Our

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[1]The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, More Than Survival (San Francisco, Washington, London: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975), p. 6.

own prediction is for a relatively soft landing, not a hard crash. But no one can be sure. In particular, we have little past experience with unfavorable job markets for college graduates, and little experience with the related phenomenon of fast declining relative rates of pay for college graduates as compared with high school graduates. The yellow light of caution should be kept flashing."[2]

Translating that quotation into facts from the real world of work, we know the job market for college graduates is and will grow increasingly more difficult for those individuals (1) who have only undergraduate degrees, (2) who have degrees in fields of general service, (3) who have degrees in education, (4) who have degrees with a single major, (5) who have average achievement records, and (6) who are majority males. By 1985 an estimated 500,000 to 800,000[3] college graduates will constitute part of an unemployed group that could reach 10,000,000 persons in the absence of special government funded work projects.

It is estimated that the number of high school graduates will decrease from 3,143,000 this year to 2,681,000 in 1985-86.[4] This amounts to a decrease of approximately 14 percent. By 1985 this drop in the number of high school graduates will increase the recruitment pressure on college admission staffs while at the same time an ever-increasingly attractive Armed Forces recruitment program will be seeking to enroll 39 percent of the males between 17 and 22 years of age.[5] Those statistics should

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[2] Ibid., p. 5.

[3] Association of American Colleges, Liberal Education--Proceedings and Papers from the 62nd Annual Meeting (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1976), p. 256.

[4] Hightstown (N.J.) Chronicle of Higher Education, 19 September 1977, p. 8.

[5] Thomas W. Carr, "Education in the Military: A Look Into the Future," Trustee 2 (September 1977): 1.

shake the lethargy of any chairman whose department may be included in the "part sick" segment of higher education.

The chairman must also recognize that the decline in student enrollments may also be matched by a decline in the academic ability of prospective majors.

The long range trend of declining ACT and SAT scores shows no sign of abating nationally. The probability, therefore, is that incoming prospective freshmen physical education majors will exhibit decreasing mathematical and verbal skills which may limit their ability to handle the heavier academic schedules of two majors so vital to alternative career options.

During the years between 1946 and 1972 most of the physical education departments were not too concerned with the recruitment of prospective majors due to the high degree of interest in teaching and coaching exhibited by the large number of incoming male college students.

The first great wave of physical education graduates, composed primarily of World War II veterans whose college expenses were met by government (G.I. BIII) grants, came tumbling out of the nation's colleges in June of 1950. Limited job opportunities for the majority of male graduates did not deter the continuing high enrollment of male majors until the early 1970's. Fortunately the recent increase in interest and participation in women's sports has contributed to an increase in female majors at the very time the number of male majors started to decrease. This increase in women majors may have postponed budget restrictions that might have otherwise been placed on those departments suffering enrollment declines.

Given a choice most physical education chairmen would gladly opt for a return to coping with those professional

preparation problems they dealt with during the "golden years" of expansion (1958-1968) rather than contend with the professional preparation problems that will be confronting them in the upcoming "leaden years" of static or declining enrollments within the next decade. Some chairmen who labored diligently over the years to develop their professional preparation programs may be confronted with the heart breaking task of having to reduce or dismantle them.

I trust that most of the members of this audience are cognizant of the ramifications involved in the process of retrenchment within a department. Retrenchment can adversely affect the morale of the department's staff and students and, thereby, can create the type of atmosphere that often leads to further retrenchment or to total elimination of the major.

Major societal changes or trends which department chairmen should consider in planning multi-career curricula include:

1. The ever increasing interest in physical fitness on the part of people of all ages and all walks of life. This recent phenomenon finds a record 87.5 million U.S. adults (18 and over) participating in athletic activity and thereby generating an expenditure of $2 billion dollars a year.[6]

2. The ongoing aging trend within our society which will result in there being 29 million people aged 65 and older by 1990. Health specialists indicate that with improvements in the control of cancer and heart disease by the year 1990 a person at the age of 65 could expect to live to 90 years. This increase in life expectancy may require individuals to plan on three or four careers during their life. Most professional people will be required to go back to school to keep up with developments in their field or to learn a new career while other individuals will be enrolling in college courses to avoid boredom.

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[6]Harry F. Waters, "Keeping Fit," Newsweek, May 23, 1977, p. 78-86.

3. For the first time in our culture, there is a growing leisure class of people. Most of these individuals who currently constitute about 15 percent of the total population have retired early, are well educated, healthy and have money to spend. These individuals as well as younger unemployed adults represent a potential market of recreational consumers whose needs will be met on an individual or group basis by private or public recreation or avocation oriented specialists.

The chairman must become even more cognizant of the fact that the future recruitment of prospective departmental majors will be determined by the department's career placement record. Most prospective professional physical education majors continue to be attracted to the field, as many of us were, by their desire to become coaches based on their own positive high school athletic experiences. In view of the demographic facts which indicate a decreasing school enrollment (22 percent over the next ten years in Michigan grades 7-12)[7] the probability of future employment for physical education teachers and coaches appears to be very limited for women and almost nonexistent for men. These students must, with proper professional guidance, be encouraged to explore nonteaching career opportunities. These alternative career opportunities may be either intra or extra departmental or institutional in nature. Career-oriented programs, such as off campus departmental internships, will require additional professional commitment and increased workloads on the part of the departmental staff.

The chairman must continue to actively recruit quality students while at the same time attempting to screen out less qualified students. Such recruitment may include having department staff members encourage promising freshmen students currently

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[7]Michigan Department of Education Task Force, Michigan's School Enrollment Decline: Projections and Implications (Michigan Department of Education, 1977), p. 6.

enrolled in their required physical education courses to consider becoming physical education majors. The department's screening process should be used not only to weed out those individuals with low ability and motivation but also to encourage the more capable majors to consider electing second majors or pursuing special alternative career opportunities provided for them.

The chairman must, if he has not already done so, inaugurate a departmental internship program (other than the traditional public school associate teaching program) in order to provide undergraduates with first hand experiences that will enable them to determine if the internship area would be suitable to their individual vocational interests and more importantly, to adapt their academic skill to the specific job situation. Participating in an internship program may provide students with direct points of entry into the job market following graduation.

The chairman should recognize that offering alternative career opportunities to departmental majors may require significant changes in the departmental curriculum and graduation requirements. Such changes may be looked upon with great disfavor on the part of both staff and student majors. The chairman may be caught between a rock (the desire to maintain the quantity and quality of present courses) and a hard place (the need to introduce new options or courses and decrease the graduation hour requirements). The chairman must realize that a physical education major's own long range vocational needs will be best served by a wise selection of nonvocationally oriented courses. Department advisors must, without discouraging their counselees' vocational aspirations, convince them that they would be better off in the long run to elect non-physical education courses that will increase their future adaptability skills rather than elect additional physical education courses beyond the minimum number required for graduation.

What skills will students need in their information--communication and service--oriented world of tomorrow? The values and skills necessary to continue to educate themselves in their relationships with others. Skills like oral and written communication, induction, relational, critical thinking, interpersonal sensitivity, understanding, and empathy, self organizational skills like setting one's own goals and evaluating their achievement.[8]

The department advisor should be aware that a successful redirection of a counselee's career interest into another area will usually not create future job dissatisfaction.

An abstract[9] of a national survey of over 4100 college graduates indicated that most of them are satisfied with their long-run jobs, with nearly six out of ten of them reporting they were "very satisfied." The study, conducted by the College Placement Council Foundation and the National Institute of Education, found that individuals who viewed their jobs as closely related to their college majors were no more satisfied than others. Therefore, the authors contend, it cannot be assumed that college graduates are unhappy in their work if the job level is nonprofessional, nor can it be assumed that graduates are under-employed if their work is unrelated to their field concentration in college.

The chairman should annually invite the institution's Director of Student Development to attend a department meeting in order to brief the staff advisors as to the educational and vocational plans, needs and interests of the incoming freshmen

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[8]Association of American Colleges, Liberal Education--Proceedings and Papers from the 63rd Annual Meeting (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1977), p. 348.

[9]American Council on Education, "Most College Grads Satisfied with Jobs, National Study Finds," Higher Education and National Affairs 26 (April 22, 1977): 8.

majors as determined by the students' ACT Interest Inventory and other vocational interest testing devices. Department advisors should make use of all test results in encouraging student counselees to expand their career choices. If the institution offers a course in Career and Life Planning, freshmen majors should be greatly encouraged to enroll.

The chairman should annually invite the institution's Placement Director to meet with departmental majors (1) at the start of their freshman year to inform them of the wide variety of field-related career opportunities other than teaching and the probable placement success, salaries and working conditions connected with each and (2) at the start of their senior year to instruct them on the proper development of written credentials and to suggest various methods, techniques and procedures they might use in searching, contacting, interviewing and accepting or rejecting potential job opportunities.

In conclusion the alert chairman will not place too much reliance on the hope of muddling through the professional career placement problem confronting the department. Standards of excellence will be maintained even as new career opportunities are introduced, for the alert chairman knows that the future well being of the department's professional preparation program will depend on quality graduates possessing skills which permit them to successfully adapt to an ever changing job milieu.

APPENDIX

Suggested Career Options For Physical Education Majors

I. Educational Areas

- A. Schools and Colleges
  - 1. Classroom Teachers
    - a. Physical Education
    - b. Academic Area of Second Major
  - 2. Guidance Counselor
  - 3. Special Education Teacher
  - 4. Administrator
    - a. Director of Athletics
    - b. Assistant Principal
    - c. Attendance Officer
    - d. Student Activities Director
    - e. Outdoor Education Director
    - f. Intramural Director
    - g. Trainer
    - h. Admissions Director
    - i. Other
  - 5. Coach
- B. Private Nursery Schools
  - 1. Teacher
- C. Federal Government Overseas Education Program (28 different countries, 7500 personnel teaching, 170,000 students)

II. Business Areas (Self employed or by others)

- A. Sports and Crafts Equipment
  - 1. Manufacturing
  - 2. Sales
- B. Sports Camps
- C. Sports Facilities
  - 1. Bowling Alley
  - 2. Ski Resort
  - 3. Tennis Courts
  - 4. Golf Course or Driving Range
  - 5. Fitness Studios
  - 6. Other
- D. Sports Communication
  - 1. Radio
  - 2. Television
  - 3. Newspapers
  - 4. Magazines

E. Sports Insurance

F. Sports Event Caterer

G. Sports Security

H. Other

III. Recreational Areas

A. Municipalities
   1. Recreation Director
   2. Recreation Staff Member

B. Industries
   1. Recreation Director

C. Y.M.C.A.--Y.W.C.A.

D. Resort Hotels, Condominiums, Retirement "Villages"

IV. Social Service Areas

A. Policeman

B. Fireman

C. Parole Officer

D. Other

V. Health Related Areas

A. Local, State and Federal Government
   1. Health Inspector
   2. Occupational Therapist
   3. Other

B. Hospitals and Convalescent Homes
   1. Physiotherapist
   2. Psychotherapist
   3. Other

C. Self Employment
   1. Physical Fitness Consultant
   2. Rejuvenation Specialist
   3. Other